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The LORD'S PRAYER

by

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FOREWORD

THE Lord's Prayer is the most universal of all Christian prayers and rituals. Those who can repeat no other accent of Christian Faith will often be familiar with the words of the Lord's Prayer. For many it may be the last tie that binds them to faith in God. It has diffused itself like incense through the aisles of the Universal Church.

In recent studies of the Lord's Prayer I was surprised to find how little printed material there was of a helpful nature dealing with this prayer, that is, outside of the standard commentaries on the Bible, which to most persons are a closed book. These sermons are printed in answer to a widespread request on the part of those who heard them that they might have them in printed form. It is my hope and prayer that they will be of help to other ministers who may preach on the subject, and be found useful for studies in the Sabbath School or meditations at the Wednesday night meeting.

At first thought a series of sermons on the Lord's Prayer seems to be the most difficult of sermonic tasks, for each petition is so complete and perfect that it seems impossible to add any helpful comment upon it. But the more one studies this great prayer, the more one will be pleasantly surprised to discover how it opens up, and how in its brief compass it declares the whole glory of God, man's duty to God, to his fellow man, to his own soul, and the certain and glorious coming of the Kingdom of God.

C.E.M.

Pittsburgh, Pa.

FREE GIFT

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I

"OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN"

"Our Father who art in heaven."—MATT. 6:9; LUKE 11:2.

THE daughter of an atheist once said to a friend, "I was brought up without any religion. I do not believe in God." Then she added a little wistfully, "But the other day in an old German book I came across a German prayer, and if the God of that prayer exists I think I could believe in Him." "What was that prayer?" her friend asked. Then she repeated slowly in German, the Lord's Prayer. The Lord's Prayer is indeed one of the proofs of the existence of God. How could there be such a thought of God, so sublime and beautiful, of man's relationship to Him, of the coming of God's kingdom, unless God existed? The fact, too, that men for so many ages have prayed, "Thy kingdom come," is a proof that one day His kingdom will come.

We speak of this prayer as the Lord's Prayer and with that Name it is forever sacred and precious to the disciples of Christ. But it is not the Lord's Prayer in the sense that it was a prayer which Christ Himself offered. It is rather the prayer that He taught His disciples to pray, for Christ Himself could never have made this prayer. It is a prayer for sinners. Christ, the sinless One, could not have asked God to forgive Him His sins and trespasses as we pray in the fifth petition. The one great prayer that we have of Christ Himself, although

we have several brief prayers by Christ recorded, is His sublime supplication and intercession which he made on the same night on which He was betrayed and which is recorded in the seventeenth chapter of St. John's Gospel.

We have two records of the Lord's Prayer and of the circumstances under which it was given by Christ to His disciples. The first, and the fullest, is in the sixth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel. There it is a part of the sermon on the Mount and is spoken to the disciples as part of our Lord's instruction as to how to pray. In contrast with hypocrites who pray standing on the street corners that they may be seen of men, Christ tells His disciples to pray in secret. They are not to use vain repetitions as the heathen do, for their Father knoweth what things they have need of before they ask it. As an example of how they ought to pray, Christ gives them the Lord's Prayer.

The other account of the Lord's Prayer is found in St. Luke's Gospel in the eleventh chapter. There we are told that "it came to pass as he was praying in a certain place when he ceased one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray as John also taught his disciples." In answer to that request Christ gave them the Lord's Prayer. Thus the sublime prayer was itself an answer to prayer. We wonder which of the disciples it was who made that request of Jesus. Most likely it was Peter. They had seen Jesus in the attitude of prayer, as they often did, at evening when the sun was sinking, or early in the morning before the sun was up; down by the seashore, or in some desert place, or in the house of His friends. What they saw and heard filled them with the desire that they, too, might pray as He did. John evidently had taught His disciples some for-

mal prayer and they wanted their Master and Teacher to do likewise. Christ was praying for Himself and for them, and for all the ages, yet it was His unconscious influence which evoked this request for a prayer, and which gave to the world the Lord's Prayer.

The record we have in Luke's Gospel of the Lord's Prayer omits the doxology at the end and uses the word "sins" instead of "debts." In structure the Lord's Prayer is simple and orderly. It begins with an ascription or address to God and ends with the doxology or praise to God. In between are six petitions, or, if the sixth petition, "Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil," is divided into two parts, then there are seven petitions: three which ask for the glory of God and three which ask for the needs of man. The Prayer is both simple and profound. As quaint Matthew Henry said of it, "A child can play in it but an elephant can swim in it." What James Montgomery said of prayer in general is particularly true of the Lord's Prayer:

> "Prayer is the simplest form of speech
> That infant lips can try;
> Prayer the sublimest strains that reach
> The Majesty on high."

The infant lisps this prayer as soon as he is able to speak and the aged falls back upon it as his viaticum as he goes down into the river of death.

The prayer is all comprehensive. Name, if you can, a single need of man, a single duty towards God or towards man which is not mentioned in the few words of this prayer. It is the most universal of all Christian language and symbols. Those who know no other accent of Christian faith may be familiar with the words of the Lord's Prayer. Its petitions may be murmured where

we least expect it. For many it may be the last tie which binds them to faith and to God. It has diffused itself like incense through the aisles of the Universal Church. In his powerful tale, *The Man Who Laughs,* Victor Hugo has a fine passage in the chapter, "The Supreme Resource." The ship on which the criminal abductors are coming from England is sinking. The guilty men now humble themselves before God. As the vessel is settling down into the deep, the outlaw doctor, after he has hurled his torch into the sea, says to his fellow passengers, "Now we are about to die. Let us pray." At that, all knelt in the water on the deck. The doctor made the sign of the Cross and began, "Our Father who art in heaven." The Provençal repeated it in French, the Irish woman in Gaelic, the others in whatever speech they used. Thus they went through the Lord's Prayer until, as they concluded, the doomed ship sank beneath the waves.

"Our Father who art in heaven." Every great building should have an appropriate entrance and this is the noble entrance like the Propylæum, the beautiful gateway to the temple of Athena at Athens. Here is the noble gateway to this temple of supplication and intercession and praise, the Lord's Prayer, "Our Father who art in heaven." "Father" is Christ's name for God. Sometimes He says, "Your Father," sometimes, "Our Father," sometimes "My Father," and sometimes "O, Father." Christ in speaking of the Supreme Being never uses the word "God," but always "Father," save on the Cross, when He cried, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" and that apparently was a quotation of the Twenty-second Psalm. He does use the phrase, "the kingdom of God," but that was a phrase in common use among the Jews when Christ came. His own word for

"God" is "Father." It occurs twelve times in the Sermon on the Mount, and more than a hundred times in St. John's Gospel. It is true, of course, that the attributes of Fatherhood are often mentioned in the Old Testament references to God, such as "his tender mercy," "like as a Father pitieth his children so the Lord pietieth them that fear him."[1] The idea of God, too, as a Father not of the individual, but of the nation, is frequent in the Old Testament: "Is it not thy Father that hath bought thee?"[2] "Israel is my son, even my first born."[3] "O Lord, thou art our Father; we are the clay, and thou art our potter; and we are all the work of thy hand."[4] "I am a father to Israel and Ephraim is my first born."[5]

The new meaning that Christ poured into that word "Father" was that God is the Father as well as the Creator of the individual. Christ said that He came to reveal the Father, and this was an important part of His revelation of God, that God is our Father. "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son; and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Matt. 11:27). Again, "O, righteous Father, the world hath not known thee, but I have known thee, and I have declared unto them thy name and will declare it" (John 17:25, 26). Christ's revelation of the Name, the mystery, the power and the goodness of God is summed up in that name which He always used in speaking of Him, "Father."

There are three ways in which God is our Father.

[1] Psalm 103. [2] Deut. 32:6. [3] Ex. 4:22. [4] Isa. 64:8.
[5] Jere. 31:9.

I. By Creation

The earthly father in a sense is the creator of his son, although it is in reality the continuance and passing on of life rather than the creation of life. But God is our Creator and Maker. He has raised us up out of the dust that we might become living souls. "Have we not all one Father? Hath not God created us?" In this sense of creation all men are the sons of God. The creation of man was the glorious climax of man's divine power and majesty. That was the thought of man in his relationship to God which St. Paul emphasized when he preached to the pagan philosophers on Mars Hill, telling them that since men are the offspring of God, they ought not to think of Him as like unto gold or silver, or stone graven by art or man's device.

This is the true Scriptural thought of man, that he did not arrive merely by fate or chance, that he is not just a higher form of beast, but that he is a son of God by creation, that God has breathed into him the breath of life. In the long table of our Lord's genealogy in St. Luke's Gospel this is the sublime conclusion—"which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God." This thought of God as our Father, in that He is our Creator and Maker, clothes man with imperishable dignity, warns him against those sins which defile the creation of God and mar the Divine image, and explains to man how it is that God so loved man even in his sins that he became incarnate in human nature in Christ and died for man on the Cross.

II. God Is Our Father by His Providence and Preservation

"God's works of providence are his most holy, wise and powerful preserving and governing all His creatures

and all their actions." As an earthly father preserves and provides for his children by God-given instinct, so God provides for His children. This providence of God is extended to all men, regardless of race or creed or moral worthiness. "He makes his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and on the unjust." The rain comes down upon Jew and Gentile, upon Christian and unbeliever, upon good and bad; and whether the soil has been plowed by a devout man or by a criminal or a malefactor or an atheist, and the seed sown when November comes, the winter wheat will spread its beautiful green blanket over the earth.

Thus far, the prayer is a universal prayer. In the sense that God is our Preserver, all men, whether Christians or not, have the right to say, "Our Father which art in heaven." In his "Universal Prayer" Alexander Pope said:

> "Father of all! in every age,
> In every clime adored;
> By saint, by savage and by sage,
> Jehovah, Jove or Lord."

Saint, savage or sage, since he is created by God and dependent on God, can say, "Our Father."

III. God Our Father as Our Redeemer in Christ

Here only the believing Christian can utter these words, "Our Father which art in heaven," in the highest sense. Because God is our Father by creation and by providence, every man is capable of the divine sonship in the sense of redemption, but not all who are capable of it rise to it. Only the redeemed and the regenerate can call God their Father in the highest sense.

Because the merit of Christ is not mentioned in this

prayer some have had the strange thought that it is not a prayer for the Christians. But, in the highest sense of God's Fatherhood, only a Christian man can make this prayer. So strongly did the early Christians feel this that only baptized persons were allowed to repeat the Lord's Prayer. It is in God's Fatherhood, in the sense of His redeeming love, that we come to see the length and the breadth and the depth and the height, and know the love of God which passeth knowledge. How beautifully Christ expressed that love of God, first of all, in the story of the shepherd who went out to seek the one sheep out of a hundred that was lost, and then in the story of the lost and defiled son who, when he returned home, was greeted with a father's kiss. God is love but many who say that do not go the next step with divine St. John and define that love: "Herein is love that God loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." The Father's heart so yearned over the loss that He gave His only Begotten Son.

Those who believe and receive God's redeeming love in Christ are taken into His family and become the sons of God in a new sense, not only by creation but by redemption. "But as many as received him that, is Christ, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." Or as Paul puts it: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God; for ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Romans 8:14, 15). In Christ, then, we have a new relationship to God. We rise to a new kind of sonship. We are adopted into the family of the Redeemed. Our creation in the Divine image makes us capable of that new sonship and relationship; but it is only by repentance, by

faith, by the new birth, by the Holy Spirit, that a man becomes a child of God in this highest sense.

The great prayer commences, "Our Father which art in heaven." We know that heaven is a state. It requires spiritual gifts and qualifications; but when Christ says in this prayer, "Our Father which art in heaven," and again teaches us to pray, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven," He plainly declares that there is a heavenly place as well as a heavenly state, a place above and beyond all this visible and temporal universe. So He said in His tender last farewell, "In my Father's house are many mansions." It is in that heavenly place, in that Father's house, that we come to know all that it means to be a child of God. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him."

All this, then, echoes in that first phrase of our Lord's Prayer, "Our Father which art in heaven." Are you able to pray this prayer? Can you pray it in this high, Christian sense? Are you a child of God? Are you a redeemed and regenerate man? Have you repented of your sins? Are you trusting in Christ alone for salvation? Are you obeying His words? If not, you can be a true child of God. You can be born again, for Christ died for all, and God our Father would have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the Truth. When you can claim your Divine sonship as a redeemed soul, then it is that you can join with all the angels and the archangels, with Peter and John and Paul, with the thief on the Cross, and the whole company of the redeemed, as together they sing and pray "Our Father which art in heaven."

II

"HALLOWED BE THY NAME"

"Hallowed be thy name."—MATT. 6:9.

THAT is the way Christ taught us to pray. First of all, to ask that God's name be hallowed. And that is the way He Himself prayed; for in a great hour of His life, He prayed, "Father, glorify thy name." All true prayer starts there. We ask, first of all, not for ourselves or for others, but for God. There is a legend of St. Theresa that she saw once an angel holding in his hand a curtain and in the other a shell filled with water. When she asked the angel what this was for, he answered that the curtain was to hide heaven, and the shell filled with water to put out the flames of hell, so that men would choose and praise God for Himself. That is what Christ invites us to do in this first petition of the Lord's Prayer. It is the keynote of all that follows. Before the prayers for the necessities of our life and for deliverance from sin and for others is this great petition, that God's name shall be hallowed.

Names mean little or nothing to us today. But it was not so in the ancient time. The old names were eloquent of personality. The name of Abraham, who was called to be the father of the faithful, means "exalted father." The name of Moses, who was drawn out of the Nile, means "drawn out." The name of Samuel, the child born in answer to his mother Hannah's prayer,

means "asked of the Lord." And, most significant of all, Jacob's new name, Israel, means "a prince with God."

The name of God used so often in the Old Testament, Jehovah, means "I am that I am." In such reverence did the Jews hold that name that they would never read it or pronounce it, substituting for it the more common name of "Lord." There was a tradition that only once in the year, on the great Day of Atonement, was the holy name of God pronounced by the High Priest.

What does "hallow" mean? It means to make sacred or holy. But God's name is holy now. Nothing could add to the greatness and holiness of God. Yet God honors us by accepting the adoration of our words and worship, and of our life. As St. Augustine put it in his *Comments on the Lord's Prayer:* "This is prayed for, not as if the name of God were not holy already; but that it may be held holy by men, that is, that God may so become known to them that they shall reckon nothing more holy and which they are more afraid of offending." We glorify God and hallow His name by our own reverence and devotion and the godliness of our life. And when we pray, "Hallowed be thy name," we ask that God will enable us and others to glorify Him, and that He would dispose all things for His own glory.

This first petition in that respect is the great missionary prayer. It is a fit prelude to the following petition, "Thy kingdom come." We have the declaration of the Scriptures that God's name shall be great from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, and that His name shall endure forever, and be continued as long as the sun. That is not only the prophecy of the Inspired Word; but it is the wish and prayer of all good men and all true Christians. In one of the great Psalms, the 107th, as the singer praises God for His manifold

mercies and providences, every now and then he breaks out with this exclamation: "Oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men." That will always be a sign of a regenerated soul, his desire that God shall be recognized and owned and worshiped and loved by the whole family of mankind.

When we pray, "Hallowed be thy name," we mean that we ask that God shall be honored and glorified as God in so far as He has revealed Himself. The complete being and essence of God, who filleth all things, we can never know; for He is the blessed and only potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen nor can see, to whom be honor and power everlasting. There are secrets in God which we cannot explore or discover. When Jacob wrestled with the angel at midnight on the banks of the Jabbok, he said to the angel, after the angel had asked him what his name was, and had changed it from Jacob the Supplanter to Israel, a prince with God, "What is thy name?" But the angel answered, "Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name?" Jacob's prayer was not answered. Divinity will not submit itself to the tests of sense. The craving to have all mystery between us and God swept away can never be answered. If we knew God's name as we know one another, He would not be God. God would have vanished. The prayer for God's name was not answered; but Jacob's other prayer for a blessing, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me," that was answered. Likewise, Manoah, the father of Samson, said unto the angel who appeared unto him and his wife, "What is thy name?" and the angel of the Lord answered, as he had answered Jacob, "Why askest

thou thus after my name, seeing it is secret?" Charles Wesley's great hymn represents Jacob in that midnight struggle with the angel, demanding of the angel of the Lord what his name was, and getting only the assurance that God's name is Love.

"Come, O thou traveller unknown,
Whom still I hold but cannot see!
My company before is gone,
And I am left alone with Thee;
With Thee all night I mean to stay,
And wrestle till the break of day.

. . . . .

"Yield to me now, for I am weak,
But confident in self-despair;
Speak to my heart, in blessings speak;
Be conquered by my instant prayer.
Speak or Thou never hence shalt move,
And tell me if Thy Name be Love.

"My prayer hath power with God; the grace
Unspeakable I now receive;
Through faith I see Thee face to face—
I see Thee face to face and live!
In vain I have not wept and strove—
Thy nature and Thy Name is Love."

To that degree, at least, and at most, God has revealed Himself to us; and that revelation of God's name and of God's character we have in our Saviour, Jesus Christ, for at the end of His ministry on earth, in His great high priestly prayer on the night of His agony, He prayed, "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world." Therefore, when we pray that God's name shall be hallowed, we ask that He shall be known and loved and worshiped and obeyed in that

revelation of Himself which we have in Jesus Christ, His Son, and that men shall adore and thank God for the salvation which has come to us through Jesus Christ.

This petition teaches us reverence and warns us against the sin of irreverence. We have seen how the Jews venerated the name of God, and shrank from even pronouncing it. It is not so much that kind of reverence which is enjoined upon us in this prayer; but the reverence of our daily speech and life. The veneration of the highest and holiest is the one solid foundation of human society. Intellect without reverence is nothing but a man's head on a beast's body. It is that which gives one anxious thought about our world today, and its future tomorrow. If there is no veneration and reverence for God, then upon what can the pillars of our society rest? That was the question that James Bryce asked in his final study of democracy. He said that the future of democracy was ultimately a question of the future of religion:

"The question of the permanency of democracy resolves itself into the question of whether mankind is growing in wisdom and virtue; and with that comes the question of what religion will be in the future, since it has been for the finer and more sensitive spirits, the motive power behind morality. Governments that have ruled by force and fear have been able to live without moral sanctions, or to make their subjects believe that those sanctions consecrated them. But no free government has ever yet so lived and thriven, for it is by a reverence for the powers unseen and eternal which impose those sanctions that the powers of evil have, however imperfectly, been kept at bay and the fabric of society held together."

Profanity is one common evidence of the lack of reverence and of the dishallowing of God's name. Some

men swear lightly and carelessly, just as other men will use slang. Sad indeed that the name of God and of Christ can be employed by men in so thoughtless and irreverent a manner. The very fact that they can do it, and, apparently, be hardly conscious of it, makes the offense all the sadder. Others, again, employ profanity when they are in a rage. And still others, and worst of all, take the name of God in vain to express their defiance of God and His will. This is what we mean by blasphemy. William Cowper has a satirical piece in which he imagines a Persian listening to an Englishman swearing, and mistakenly thinking that he must be worshiping and praying, since he used the name of God so frequently, asks him for an interest in his prayers.

> "A Persian, humble servant of the Sun,
> Who, though devout, yet bigotry had none,
> Hearing a lawyer, grave in his address,
> With adjurations every word impress
> Supposed the man a bishop, or at least,
> God's name so much upon his lips, a priest;
> Bowed at the close with all his graceful airs
> And begged an interest in his frequent prayers."

A heathen coming to America and hearing people pray might get the idea that we are a much more devout and religious people than we are. There was a time when profanity seemed to be confined to certain vulgar groups. There were certain places and associations where one might expect to hear profane language; but now there seems to be no limit to the currency of this sin. Profanity has now passed over into polite and educated circles. A well known minister, making a survey at one of the large colleges for women, discovered that

some two hundred of the students acknowledged the habit of profanity.

There was a time, when, if an oath was introduced on the printed page, the first letter would be printed, and then a blank. But now all that has been done away with, and the full oath is boldly printed. Men defend this on the ground that a book is supposed to describe life as it is. If profane men are introduced, then they must talk as profane men. In the play which has had the longest continuous run of any play in the history of the American stage, and which is now showing in Pittsburgh, according to one who sat on the front seat and took notes, the name of Almighty God is blasphemed forty times. It seems undoubted that profanity is on the increase in this country, and that would not be strange since reverence is on the decrease. Where reverence fades, profanity will flourish.

Profane speech, taking the name of God in vain, is in itself something of a mystery. What is it? A passion? An instinct? Or what? One thing we do know about it, and that is that it is a sad abuse of the divinely bestowed power of speech, that which separates man from the beast. It is in itself an irrefragable evidence of the fall of man. "Therewith," said James of the tongues, "bless we God and curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God." By that he means that men employ the Divine Name in prayer and worship and the same name in cursing men. "Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. Doth a fountain send forth from the same place sweet water and bitter?" No, you never saw such a fountain. There is only one fountain where that can be observed, sweet and bitter water flowing forth, and that is the fountain of man's speech and of man's heart.

Of all sins, profanity, which is a direct assault upon God, is the most foolish and the most useless. No sin, of course, is in the end useful. Yet a man can lie and for a little time postpone evil consequences. Or he can steal and use his stolen property. Or he can commit an immorality and have a momentary pleasure. And so with the other of the commandments which he breaks. But when he breaks the Third Commandment, when he takes the name of God in vain, he gets absolutely nothing out of it. What difficulty did profanity ever solve? What thorn did it ever pluck? What mistake did it ever correct? What loss did it ever make good? What pain did it ever ease? What enemy did it ever punish? What friend did it ever help? The profane man is always one who serves Satan without wages.

At one of the army camps last year, a major general addressed the officers of one of the divisions, and in the course of his remarks used profane language. This general was a Catholic, and one of those at the meeting was the division chaplain, also a Catholic. This chaplain wrote the general a letter of protest and rebuke. The general answered in a spirit of penitence and humility. A year later, when this general needed a chaplain to fill the vacancy of corps chaplain, he appointed this chaplain who had rebuked him to that office. Here was another instance of the fulfillment of the promise, "Them that honor me will I honor."

Christian people ought not to hesitate to express their repugnance to profanity. The organizer of an anti-profanity league, who for a long period of years, has handed to those whom he heard swearing a card with a printed request upon it not to use profane language, has testified that he never received a rebuff, but always an apology.

A lieutenant colonel at one of the Southern camps,

disturbed by the amount of profanity among the troops, posted this notice:

"The General is sorry to inform that the foolish, wicked practice of profane cursing and swearing, a vice heretofore little known in an American army, is growing in fashion. He hopes the officers will by example, as well as by influence, endeavor to check it. We can have little hope of the blessing of Heaven on our arms if we insult it by our impiety and folly. Added to this it is a vice so mean and low, without any temptation, that every man of sense and character detests and despises it."

The commanding officer noted quite a decline in the use of profane language since he posted the above notice. The words are those of George Washington, taken from an order issued to the army by him in 1776.

Woodrow Wilson liked to speak of his godly ministerial father, Dr. Joseph R. Wilson, for many years a distinguished Presbyterian minister in the South. Among the anecdotes he related of him was this:

"He was once in a company of men where they were having a heated discussion. In the midst of it one let out a profane expletive. Then seeing Dr. Wilson there, he offered him an apology, saying, 'Sir, I had forgotten that you were present. Please pardon me.' Dr. Wilson's reply was, 'It is not to me that you owe your apology, but to God.'"

That is always so. The man who swears does indeed shock the sensibilities of any true Christian, and what can be more repulsive and odious to a good man than to hear the name of God taken in vain? But if profanity is an offense to one's fellow man, then how much greater an offense is it to God. The time was when even the civil laws took cognizance of profanity and punished it.

That time has passed, and even in polite circles today profanity goes unrebuked.

But the commandment of God and the punishment attached to it have never been revoked. "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

When St. Paul's Cathedral was being built, its famous architect, Sir Christopher Wren, had posted in different parts of the structure this notice:

"Whereas among laborers and others that ungodly custom of swearing is so frequently heard to the dishonor of God and to the contempt of His authority, and to the end that such impiety may be utterly banished with these works which are intended to the service of God and the honor of religion, it is ordered that profane swearing shall be a sufficient crime to discharge any laborer that comes to the call."

To the thought of the builder of St. Paul's and those other noble temples associated with his name profane words spoken by the builders desecrated and profaned the holy place. But if that is true of the temple made with hands, how much more so is it true of that most wonderful temple of all, the temple not made with hands, man himself. Therefore, let us pray, in spirit and in truth, "Hallowed be thy name," or, as the Psalmist of old said, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips."

III

"THY KINGDOM COME"

"Thy kingdom come."—LUKE 11:2.

"O where are kings and empires now
Of old that went and came?
But, Lord, Thy Church is praying yet,
A thousand years the same."

AGE after age, century after century, the Church has repeated that petition which our Lord taught it to pray, "Thy kingdom come." The very fact that this prayer has been made through the ages and, in a certain sense, by devout believers in God even in the Old Testament times, gives us renewed faith that one day in God's own time that kingdom will come.

Nothing is so powerful as an idea. The world is in anguish and travail today because of a political idea, the domination of the world by one people and one race. An idea is powerful in science, in war, in the form of some new invention. But here is the grandest idea that ever came into the mind of man, not an idea that man himself conceived, but which was revealed unto him, and that is, the kingdom of God. The idea of a spiritual kingdom, a kingdom of righteousness and glory, into which all of God's people will be gathered, in a commonwealth of virtue and faith with Christ as King, has no parallel outside the Bible. That such a

teaching and such an idea is in the Bible is one of the convincing proofs that the Bible is a revelation from God.

The kingdom of God, it goes without saying, is the burden of Christ's teaching. The phrase occurs together with the kingdom of heaven, no doubt, meaning the same thing, many times in the four Gospels. Christ tells us of the origin of the kingdom, of its reception in the heart of man in the world, of its growth, of its worth, the conditions upon which it enters us and we enter it, the hindrances to it and the future glory of it. The first word of Christ's teaching, according to St. Mark, was the kingdom of God. Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming the kingdom of God and saying the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Almost His last teaching had to do with the kingdom when He said that when "this Gospel of the kingdom has been preached throughout the world, then cometh the end." His last act in His earthly life was to admit a soul into that kingdom, for when the dying thief said, "Jesus, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom," Christ answered, "Today, shalt thou be with me in paradise."

There is, indeed, a sense in which we do not need to pray for the coming of the kingdom of God, for there is a universal reign with God over the whole universe, and which takes in star, and rock, and sea, and tree, and man, and beast. It governs all His creatures and all their actions. But in the sense of a world reconciled to God, and in harmony with His will, the kingdom is still to come.

I. The Kingdom of God within Us

There are three ways in which we can think of the kingdom of God. First, the kingdom of God within us.

This is the kingdom that "cometh not with observation." It is primarily an inner life and growth. In that sense the kingdom of God is here in the heart of every redeemed man. As was said of old concerning God's Word and God's will:

"It is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go up for us to heaven, and bring it unto us? . . . Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldest say, Who shall go over the sea for us and bring it unto us? . . . But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart." [1]

In the kingdom of God within man's heart we have Christ's sublime thought of man. He knew what was in man and needed not that any should tell Him or testify of Him. He could see and understand, as we cannot, the sad wreckage and ruin of man's life, and yet in every heart Christ saw a possible empire and kingdom of God.

In His teachings Christ makes it plain how we are to enter that kingdom. One condition is repentance. Christ came preaching that the Gospel of the kingdom of God was at hand, and then added, "Repent ye and believe the gospel." No one enters the kingdom of God, or has it within him, who thinks he is by nature fit and ready to go into that kingdom. In Athens they had two temples, one to honor and one to virtue, and they were so constructed that the only way one could enter the Temple of Honor was by passing through the Temple of Virtue. So it is impossible to enter the kingdom of God except by repentance.

With repentance go faith and humility. Christ was always emphasizing faith. "Have faith," He told the men whom he was about to heal of their diseases.

[1] Deut. 30:11-14.

And wherever He found faith He stopped to pay it His tribute.

Another condition is humility. "Except ye repent and become as a little child ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God." We must have the child's faith, we must have the child's trust; we must have the child's openness of mind. If the truth were told, is it not the lack of humility, the unwillingness to come into the kingdom of God as a little child, that keeps so many out of it?

All this teaching of Jesus as to entering the kingdom of God, or having the kingdom of God enter us, is summed up in what He says about the new birth. "Except a man be born of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." And again, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see, [he cannot even see] the kingdom of God," and has no true conception of it and no desire to enter into it.

Christ speaks also of the hindrances to the Kingdom of God. It is common today to speak of social, or political, conditions as the chief hindrances to the Kingdom of God. But Christ did not so speak. The hindrances of which He does speak are those inner hindrances, the things within man's own life and breast. These are, according to the Parable of the Sower, the love of ease, the dread of affliction or persecution, the cares of the world, the love of riches, and the love of other things which choke and destroy the word that has been sown. That was true when Christ preached. It is true of men and women today, and here in this church.

II. The Kingdom as the Church Now in the World, or the Kingdom of Grace

This kingdom or the Invisible Church, although not

identical with it, is expressed in the Visible Church which Christ founded upon earth through His apostles.

The word church appears just twice in the Gospels, once where Christ gives instructions to a man who has vainly sought reconciliation with a brother who has wronged him, to tell it to witnesses and if the man is still unrepentant, then he is to "tell it to the church," probably meaning the assembly of people or the authorities rather than what we understand by the Church.[1] The other passage is where Christ says to Peter, "Upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." [2] But when we pass from the Gospels to the Acts and the Epistles and Apocalypse, the Church has taken the place of the kingdom of God, and it is about the Church, its origin, its growth, its glory, and its final victory, that the inspired penman writes. Wherever in the world there stands a true Church of Christ, founded upon the truth of the Gospel and the deity of Christ, and which has within its visible number those who are truly regenerated men and seek to do the will of God, to follow in the footsteps of Christ, and to work and pray for the extension of the kingdom of God, there the kingdom of God in the form of the Church, exists. Hence, to make this prayer is a token that we love the Church, that we believe it is God's plan for the world, God's kingdom in the world, and that we desire and labor for the spread and triumph of the Church.

How then about this prayer, "Thy kingdom come," in the sense of a victory of Christ's Church? Can you really pray it? Do you really desire it? Do you desire it enough to give of your time, and of your labor, and of

[1] Matt. 18:17. [2] Matt. 16:18.

your money? Can the lodge, the fraternal society, the political organization, the social club, the civic club, the woman's club, the college club, or any of these countless organizations which exist in human society today, count on you, whereas the Church cannot count on your regularity, your devotion, your love, your sacrifice? If so, then what right have a great multitude to pray, "Thy kingdom come"?

The great need of the Church of Christ on earth today is what we might call "kingdom men," men who are deeply interested, prayerfully interested, sacrificially interested in the coming of God's Kingdom.

III. The Kingdom of Glory, or the Consummation of the Kingdom

There is the kingdom of God in history as expressed in the heart of the believer and as expressed in the Church of the Living God in the world. But there is also the kingdom of God which is beyond history, the kingdom of God which is to come. It is very evident that Christ spoke of the kingdom of God of both a present kingdom and a kingdom to come. These two kingdoms are related to one another as the seed is to the tree.

Christ spoke of the kingdom of God as present. He said that the kingdom of God is within us now. He said that if He by the Spirit of God casts out devils then is the kingdom of God in our midst. But He also spoke of the kingdom of God as a future fact and glory. He told His disciples at the Last Supper that He would drink no more of the fruit of the vine until that day He drank it new with them in the kingdom of God. Only the Scriptures have this teaching as to a future kingdom of glory, that sublime goal and end of human history, towards

which the whole creation by the redemptive power is moving. That day when Christ, having put all His enemies under His feet, shall deliver over the kingdom unto His Father, and God shall be all and in all.

One could not pretend to do justice to this great idea, the future kingdom of God, without falling back upon those majestic Old Testament predictions which describe the glory of that kingdom, a glory compared with which the brightest day that has yet dawned upon the world at midnight and the fairest glories which have invested it are but the shadow of darkness. Predictions such as we have in the prophecy of Isaiah concerning the Messianic day, when the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established upon the hills, when the nations shall learn war no more and beat their swords into plowshares; when universal peace shall reign, peace between God and man, peace between man and man, peace between man and nature, peace between the animals themselves, "when the wolf shall dwell with the lamb and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them; when the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and the suckling child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice's den, and they shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." Or those great empire and kingdom predictions of Daniel, as when he saw the long succession of world empires, followed by the empire of Christ, when the colossus, whose head was of gold and whose breast and arms were of silver, and whose belly of brass, and whose legs of iron, and whose feet part iron and part clay, was smitten with the stone cut out of the moun-

tain without hands, and that stone became a kingdom which shall break in pieces all other kingdoms, but which itself shall stand forever. History is to come to a stop with Christ's kingdom, and all world movements, even those which seem so terrible and anti-God, like those of today, are being overruled of God for the bringing in of His Everlasting Kingdom.

But how is the final kingdom to come? Some think it will come by natural growth and evolution of human society. They tell us to look back and see the progress that the world has already made. One day the ape and tiger will die of man and the blessed day will come. But the events of the last twenty-five years have greatly shaken man in an invincible law of progress, which, regardless of what men and nations do, will at length bring in the kingdom. If that is all that mankind has to hope for and rely upon, this seductive romance of the natural development and evolution of human society, then woe to mankind.

Others say the final kingdom will come by the growth and expansion of the Church in its present form, by the increase and diffusion of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Let us not be impatient, they say. One day with the Lord is as a thousand years and a thousand years as one day. Remember, we are told, Ezekiel's vision of the temple waters, how that mystic stream which issued from the doors of the temple and took its way eastward and southward, was at first to the ankles, then to the knees, then to the loins, then a river to swim in, a river that left verdure and plenty wherever it flowed, and entering the Dead Sea cured it and healed it. For all we know, they say, Christian influence may be today just at the ankle stage. Wait until it has become a river in which to swim, a river which shall make glad all man-

kind and take the death and poison of sin out of man's heart.

But when we look into God's Word, is that the picture that we see? As to the ultimate coming of the kingdom, the ultimate goal, there is no doubt. But there is no reason to believe that the future history of the Church will in any respect greatly differ from its past history. In that profound Parable of the Kingdom, the wheat and the tares, Christ teaches that the tares of evil will be found growing down to the very end. We see nothing in the teaching of Christ which gives us reason to believe that when He returns He will come to a world that is at peace with God or at peace with itself. On the contrary, it is to be a world still ravaged by war, rebellious against God, a world in turmoil and confusion. "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?"

How, then, will the final kingdom come? There is no doubt as to that when we turn to the Scriptures. It will come when the King Himself comes. It will come by another great Divine intervention in human affairs. Christ came the first time in the "fullness of time" to save sinners. Likewise, in the "fullness of time" He will come the second time to usher in the glorious kingdom of God. In Scotland, during the days of the flight and exile of Prince Charles, the Highlanders never met one another on the wind-swept moors, or in lonely glen, or at the table of a friend, without lifting a cup to the return of their prince and king. The Christian believer ever lifts his cup in faith and hope and love to the return of his Prince and King, the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Every time we celebrate the Lord's Supper that is what we do—"Ye do show the Lord's death till he come." Therefore, he who prays sincerely, "Thy kingdom come," must also gladly and sincerely pray

that last prayer of the Bible, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

But do you really want Him to come? The kingdom cannot come without the King. Do you really want Him to come? Would you want His coming to interrupt your business success? Would you desire His coming to put a stop to your plans for your family? Would you want His coming to set aside your ambitions and your worldly expectations? How searching, after all, are those two prayers, "Thy kingdom come," and, "Even so come, Lord Jesus."

The ultimate test of this prayer, "Thy kingdom come," is whether we can pray it in the sense that the kingdom of God is already in our heart. Can you pray it in that way? Are you a regenerate man? Have you entered into the kingdom of God as a little child? Do you love His kingdom more or His world more? Are you serving the world more, or are you serving His kingdom more? These are searching questions. If His kingdom has really come into our hearts, if it is now within us, then we can truly pray that it will come more and more as the seed grows into the flower that blesses the earth, as the dawning sun rises to its midday splendor. No matter how far we have gone in the Christian life, there will always be occasion in this tabernacle, in this world, to pray for more of the coming of that kingdom within your hearts. And when the kingdom has come in our hearts, then we shall want the King to come, too, and we can pray, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

IV

"THY WILL BE DONE"

"Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven."—MATT. 6:10.

THE last words of Richard Baxter, the famous English Puritan divine, author of the celebrated work, *The Saints' Everlasting Rest,* and the man "who preached as a dying man to dying men, and never sure to preach again," were these, "Lord, what Thou wilt, where Thou wilt, and when Thou wilt."

So Christ taught us to pray in this third petition of our Lord's Prayer, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." There, in a sense, is the one prayer which will always be answered. All earnest prayer gets an answer, for God has revealed that He is the prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God. Even when the answer is No, still it is an answer. But here is a prayer which in the positive sense, that is, what is asked for, will always be answered. Indeed, at first thought it would seem unnecessary for us to make such a prayer, for since God is the august Sovereign of the Universe and none can stay His hand, what He wills must always be done. "He doeth his will in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth." His will is done in the natural world, the physical universe, "fire and hail, snow and vapor, stormy wind, fulfilling his will." It is done also among the angels of heaven and, in the higher sense, among men, for "who resisteth his will?" God is the

supreme Actor in human history. He makes the wrath of man to praise Him, and the residue He will restrain; and the great men and the great nations and empires are but the brief embodiment or the transient realization of His will. Amid the storms and convulsions of our day it is a great comfort, and a great assurance, to be able to believe that God's plan moves straight forward and that He will overrule the wicked will and purpose of men to His own great and wise end.

Yet, in another sense, God's will is not done, but everywhere resisted and rejected by men. Certainly it is not the will of God, who hath made all nations of one blood, to dwell together upon the face of the earth, that they should hate one another and make war on one another and destroy one another as they are doing today. It is not His will that man, made to walk the earth as Lord of it, should be taking refuge from death in the caves and dens of the earth. It is not His will that innocence should be soiled and betrayed. It is not His will that the face of the poor should be ground in the dust. It is not His will that men should make money and enrich themselves by exploiting and commercializing human passion. And yet these things are done, and done so widely and commonly, that the stark horror of it ceases to amaze us or shock us. Hence, the appropriateness of this third petition, "Thy will be done."

I. Thy Will Be Done Through Men, and Through Me

When we pray, "Thy will be done," we pray that God's will shall be done by men and through men, instead of being rejected and broken and defied by man. There is a mystery in our creation. God made us free to stand, though free to fall. And the possibility of a fall

must have been foreseen by God when He created man with this august power of will. God made man free to choose, even though He chose to defy His will, yet man is able also to do and obey the will of God.

> "Our wills are ours, we know not how,
> Our wills are ours to make them Thine."

To the extent that we are all captains of our souls and masters of our fate, we can, if we will, do the will of God. We can be with God or against Him. Hence, we pray that men everywhere shall be disposed to do the will of God. What a world it would be, if even only those who are in places of rule and responsibility on earth, all the heads of the nations now at war with one another, should make it their first thought and desire to do the will of God!

When we pray, "Thy will be done," that means that God has a will for each one of us. Humbly though we say it, for each of us there is a *special* will of God that we can do. St. Paul, whose life was a grand illustration of doing the will of God, began his Christian life that way. Up to the Damascus vision, Paul had been resisting the will of God. That was intimated in what was said to him at that time, "Why persecutest thou me? It is vain for thee to kick against the pricks." But after that vision Paul gave his life to doing the will of God. He commenced his Christian life with that great question, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And out of that obedience to the will of God came the grandeur of his life. When we sincerely repeat this prayer, "Thy will be done," we are asking God to show us what His will for us is, and that He would make us, by His grace, able and willing to do and obey His will.

Great things are possible for every one of us who yields himself to the will of God and makes that his highest ambition. In 1872, Dwight L. Moody attended an early morning meeting in a haymow in Ireland and heard Henry Varley say in a quiet way, "The world has yet to see what God can do with and for and through and in a man who is fully and wholly consecrated to him." The next Sabbath, sitting high up in Spurgeon's Tabernacle, in the same seat he had occupied in 1867, Moody, as he thrilled to the preaching of Spurgeon, went back again and again to those words of Henry Varley, and said to himself, "The world has yet to see! With and for and through and in a man! Varley meant any man! Varley didn't say he had to be educated or brilliant, or anything else—just a man! Well, by the Holy Spirit in me, I will be one of those men!" Only once has the world seen what God can do with a man wholly consecrated to His will, and that was in the life of the Divine man, Christ Jesus, who said that His meat was "to do the will of him that sent me." But among those who have demonstrated what God can do with a man, in the limitations of human nature, who is consecrated to the will of God, Moody stands high on the list. There is an unexplored, an untaken territory, with rich spoils, awaiting all of us who will resolve fully to do the will of God.

When we pray, "Thy will be done," we pray, too, that we shall be kept from resisting and rejecting the will of God, and that we shall not resist His Holy Spirit. I ask you now quietly to review and inspect your life. If there is in it anything which is in willful disobedience to, or rejection of, the will of God, then in true penitence turn to God and say to Him, "Thy will be done."

II. God's Will Done in Us, That Is, Accepted of Us

There are many things in the appointed order of life which it is not easy for us to accept or to receive as the will of God for us. There are, first of all, what are sometimes spoken of as the acts of God, that is, those things with which our own will, or man's will, has nothing whatever to do; such as misfortune, accident, sickness, bereavement. Yet often these acts of God are met on our part with a spirit of rebellion instead of trust. But these adversities of life are clothed with dignity when we accept them as God's high purpose for our soul and believe that there is good in them for us.

A beautiful expression of this faith in God's providence in our lives is found in the letter which Blaise Pascal wrote to a friend in the time of sore bereavement. Instead of repeating the ordinary platitudes of consolation, Pascal comforted his friend with the doctrine of predestination and God's will, saying:

"If we regard this event not as an effect of chance, not as a fatal necessity of nature, but as a result inevitable, just, holy, of a decree of His providence, conceived from all eternity, to be executed in such a year, day, hour, and such a place and manner, we shall adore in humble silence the impenetrable loftiness of His secrets; we shall venerate the sanctity of His decrees, we shall bless the acts of His providence; and uniting our will with that of God Himself, we shall wish with Him, in Him, and for Him, the thing that He has willed in us and for us in all eternity."

Again, there are those things which happen through the evil purpose and evil deeds of men. Here it is still harder to accept the overruling providence of God and to hold to that great article of the Christian's creed, that all things work together for good to them that love God.

Some years ago, the little son of a Tacoma physician was kidnaped from his home. Weeks afterwards the dead body was discovered in the snow in the forests. Certainly it was not the will of God, in the sense that He planned it or desired it, that this atrocious deed should be done. Yet the Christian father, relating this terrible event to God's purpose in his life, said, "There is undoubtedly a divine act of Providence which decrees what shall happen at a time like this. An undying faith in our Maker and a firm conviction that Charles' going was His will and desire will give us strength to carry on."

A noble instance, indeed, one of the noblest on record, of finding in sad and painful experience the will of God for our souls, is the case of Joseph, whom his brethren so cruelly used, selling him as a slave into Egypt, where he suffered unjustly in prison. After the death of their father Jacob, Joseph's brethren, thinking that now he would take vengeance on them, came to him with what they claimed was a message from the dying Jacob, asking that Joseph show mercy to his brothers. It was then that Joseph cried out, "Am I in the place of God? As for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good." That was a sublime utterance on the part of Joseph of Christ's yet not revealed prayer, "Thy will be done."

Of course, the supreme example of this kind of doing of the will of God is the prayer of Christ Himself in the Garden of Gethsemane, "If it be possible let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will but as thou wilt." From what was it that Christ was shrinking in that awful scene in the garden? Certainly, not from the pain of the Cross, nor from its shame and odium, nor from the treason and betrayal and denial on the part of his friends. It was from the awful, and to us, indefinable

and incomprehensible, cup of man's guilt, the penalty of sin, the terrible price that had to be paid for man's redemption, the experience of the sinner's doom and death, that made Him cry out on the Cross, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" But had He not come to do God's will? To drink that very cup? Yes, He had, indeed. And yet here in His human nature, at least, there is a shrinking from the bitterness of that cup. But it is to be observed that Christ did not pray, "Let this cup pass from me," but rather, *"If it be possible,* let this cup pass from me." If it fell within God's will, but not otherwise. And immediately, He adds, "Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done." And when He had thus prayed, a great angel, the evangelist tells us, came and ministered unto Him. There Christ is forever our Example and our Inspiration. Not His Gethsemane, but our own Gethsemane we must all meet, and there kneel before our own cup.

"All those who journey, soon or late,
Must pass within the garden's gate;
Must kneel alone in darkness there,
And battle with some fierce despair.
God pity those who cannot say,
"Not mine, but Thine," who only pray,
"Let this cup pass," and cannot see
The *purpose* in Gethsemane." *

Conclusion: As It Is in Heaven

Christ, who is the Heavenly One, did God's will on earth as it is done in heaven. How is it done in heaven? And who are those who do the will of God in heaven? They are the angels who behold His face and the souls

* "Gethsemane," by Ella Wheeler Wilcox, *Poems of Power,* W. B. Conkey Co., Hammond, Indiana.

of the redeemed. The angels are almost the most mentioned and the most neglected personalities of the Bible. They do the will of God immediately, perfectly, gladly, and universally. In heaven is infinite calm and peace and beauty, because there God's will is done. Because of that, in heaven there is no more curse and no more sin and no more pain and no more tears and no more death. All these are due to the fact that men resist the will of God; but heaven is one vast empire of obedience.

People are often, and naturally, curious about heaven and the order of life there. How will the soul manifest itself to another soul? Shall we know one another? What language shall we employ? What task shall engage us? What enterprise shall enthrall us? All that is interesting to think about and to contemplate. But there is one thing about heaven that has been revealed, the only one thing about which we can be sure, and that is that there God's will is gladly and perfectly done.

To prepare, then, for heaven the best way is to resolve now to do the will of God. A man who did not want to do the will of God on earth would not feel at home in heaven among those who do it as the angels in heaven do. Christ said it was by doing His will, not by talking about it, or by singing His praises, that men enter into the kingdom of heaven. Christ, the Eternal Son of God, is the supreme and beautiful expression of the will of God for us. It is not the will of God that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance and be saved. And it is the will of God that all men should be saved through faith in Jesus Christ, who died upon the Cross for sinners.

That great issue, then, I present to you in closing. Are you reconciled to God? It is His will that you should be saved through Christ. Have you too willed

that? And does your life prove and demonstrate that that is your will?

A noted minister of a former generation bore testimony that his whole life was deeply influenced and impressed by a word spoken to him by an aged Christian woman. It was this: "Be ye aye in wi' God, Duncan, for He's aye right." Yes, God is always right. Are you right with God?

V

"GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD"

"Give us this day our daily bread."—MATTHEW 6:11.

HOW many of you here in this morning have ever uttered that prayer on the morning of a day when you really did not know where the bread for that day was to come from? Not many, I take it. If we have stopped at all to ponder over that petition when we repeated it together at the close of the prayer at the family altar, or at the close of our own prayers, or with the congregation in the church, probably the thought which came into our mind was one of thanks to God for providing for our wants. But if only those are to use this prayer who are in want, or on the verge of want, it would not be a universal prayer. But it must be such, for Christ taught us all to pray after this manner, and to say, "Give us this day our daily bread." And why is it a universal prayer, suitable for all who believe in God? It is because we are all, as we shall see, dependent upon God, and only the frailest wall of His providence, at any time, intervenes between us and want.

This petition for our daily bread follows the petitions for God's glory and the coming of His Eternal Kingdom. Some have considered such a petition for our bodily and material needs out of place after the sublime supplications with which the Lord's Prayer commences and the sublime supplications with which it comes to an end.

So much so that they have fancied that this is a prayer not for real bread, but for the spiritual needs of the soul. But there is no need for such an interpretation. That which is natural, as Paul said, is first. Our souls in this life reside in a body, and that body must be maintained. The wisest sage, the purest saint, would be dead in a few days if he ate no bread. If men were not sustained by bread there could be no prayers, no hymns of adoration, no sermons, no noble literature, no heroic deeds of courage and chivalry, no beautiful acts of self-denial and sacrifice. The whole spiritual structure of mankind stands upon the foundation of man's body, and that body must be sustained. Hence, the deep appropriateness of this fourth petition, "Give us this day our daily bread."

I. Humility

When we make this prayer in sincerity we humbly recognize that God is the giver of all good, and the *only* giver. We confess our complete dependence upon Him and His providence. With all our intricate systems of finance and industry, and business and social organization, it must always be remembered that man is completely dependent upon nature; and nature is dependent upon God. That is beautifully expressed in the 104th Psalm, a verse that may be applied to the whole creation:

"These wait all on thee that thou mayest give them their meat in due season. That thou givest them they gather. Thou openest they hand, they are filled with good. Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled. Thou takest away their breath, they die and return to the dust."

For our temporal existence most of us depend upon

others. Perhaps there is no one in the congregation this morning who is directly engaged in the production of the necessities of existence. By that I mean directly engaged in the cultivation of the soil, for Mother Earth is the mother and upholder of us all. Nor will there be many here who are directly engaged in the distribution of the products of the soil. This will remind one how dependent we are upon the labors of others, and how the labors of those others are dependent upon the soil, upon nature, and upon nature's God. How easily the whole vast system upon which we depend for temporal existence can be broken and interrupted and destroyed! War can do it. War has done it in a terrible way in great portions of the world today. A general strike of labor could do it. A complete paralysis of industry could do it. Then men could easily find themselves in a situation where, even if they had money, they could not eat, and hence could not live. Thus it is that when we look through the intricate maze of society, we come to see how frail the fabric is that keeps us from want. Every one of us is dependent upon God. The millionaire and the poorest laborer alike can daily utter this prayer with humility and faith, "Give us this day our daily bread."

II. Moderation and Simplicity

In that great tale we liked to read as children, and which we can read again as men and get great profit from it, *Gulliver's Travels,* the shipwrecked Gulliver was set upon in his slumber by the tiny Lilliputians, who bound him with hundreds of ropes. These ropes were only the smallest threads, and yet by the very multitude of them he was bound. He could have broken each of them or several of them in his hand, but not the hundreds with which they bound him. Sometimes man in

our complex society today impresses one as bound like Gulliver was. He is bound by a multiplicity of things which are now regarded as essential to our existence, but which in reality are not.

This prayer does not ask for mansions, for changes of raiment, for the luxuries of life and its superfluities, but for bread to sustain our daily existence. How few things, after all, man really needs! Perhaps on some long journey in an unsettled country you have been surprised to find how few things were really necessary, and how well and comfortable you could be without a multitude of things which formerly you had with you and about you. The physicians and dietitians make it clear, too, how few things in the way of food are really necessary for healthy, bodily existence. Mankind has been cursed with its bondage to the dispensable and the superfluous. The fourth petition of the Lord's Prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread," warns us not to entangle ourselves in the things of this world. Man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. When we utter this prayer we utter those other prayers of the Bible, "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed with me food convenient, lest I deny thee and say, who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain!" [1]

III. Trust in God

In this petition we are taught to pray for *today's* bread, "Give us *this day* our daily bread." We do not pray, "Give me a hundred days' bread," or bread for 365 days, or bread for ten years, but bread for today. That teaches us to trust in God. It does not exempt any man from labor or justify any man living like a drone upon

[1] Prov. 30:8-9.

the labors of others, or earning his bread in a business that debauches and corrupts and injures mankind. If a man will not work neither shall he eat, was the law that the apostle gave to the early Church.

When the manna was sent from heaven to feed the children of Israel in the wilderness, the instructions given were that they were to gather just enough for the one day. If a man gathered more than was necessary for the day's needs it turned to corruption on his hands. How true and searching a parable of life that is! Who can tell how much of the disorder, woe and bitterness, sorrows, and wars of the world are due to this human passion of gathering more manna than is necessary for the day, making haste to be rich, trampling on the rights of others, defiling our own souls, and forgetting God.

The true attitude towards God is one of trust. That is expressed in this prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread." Worry is perhaps the most universal, the most exhausting, the most foolish, and the most useless sin. Anticipated troubles loom gigantic in the distance. There is sound sense in that old quatrain:

> "Better never trouble trouble
> Till trouble troubles you,
> For you only make your trouble
> Double trouble when you do." [1]

On one of my first trips to London I went to visit the home of Thomas Carlyle in Chelsea, London. In that home he had built in the top story a vault-like chamber where he was shut off from the noise of the traffic of the street, and, so far as possible, from all other noises, domestic and otherwise. But in the neighborhood there was a cock whose shrill clarion penetrated even through

[1] David Kepple.

the thickness of that sound-proof chamber. Carlyle was greatly annoyed by the crowing of the cock, and protested to its owner against this daily interruption of his work. The man said in extenuation of his cock that it crowed only three times a day, and therefore could not be so great an annoyance. "Yes," said Carlyle, "but if you only knew what I suffer waiting for that cock to crow!"

A great many people sit around waiting for the cock to crow, and waiting is really worse than the crowing of the cock. With a magnifying telescope they scan the horizon for troubles that are yet afar off. But all this is foreign to the spirit of true faith and to the teachings of our Lord. "Which of you," He asked, "by taking thought can add a single cubit to his stature? Take, therefore, no thought [that is, this anxious worrying kind of thought] for the morrow, for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." How true that is. Which of you by taking thought ever added a cubit to your stature? Which of you by worrying ever held off the appointment of God for your life, or postponed by a single hour any cup that you had to drink? But when I put the question the other way, and ask, Which of you by anxious thought and worry has not weakened your strength, and lost your sleep and lined your face with care, and diminished your influence and your usefulness for good upon others? then, if frank answers were given, not a few would be compelled to say, "I am that man," or "I am that woman."

One of the things that has struck me, coming in contact with all sorts of people, as a minister of a church like this is bound to do, and not only people in this church, but people outside of it, is that those who do

the most worrying about the business and financial situation, about the needs of tomorrow, are, as a rule, those who have the most, and who, therefore, from the standpoint of this world, have the least to worry about. How beautiful is the implied trust of this simple prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread"! When Paul's ship on that last journey up to Jerusalem was sailing down the Asia Minor coast, touching at those golden isles of the Ægean, Luke the chronicler of that voyage, tells us how they sailed. One day to Mitylene, the next day Chios, and the next day Samos and the next day Miletus, and the next day Coos, and the next day Rhodes. That is the way to take your voyage through life. It is a long voyage, with days of calm and days of storm and tempest, days bright with the light of the sun, and days that are dark and overcast. But, day by day, island by island, using the strength God gives you for the day, and trusting Him for the morrow, that is the way to take the journey of life.

IV. Charity for All Men

You will note that Christ did not teach us to pray, "Give *me* this day *my* daily bread," but "Give us *our* daily bread." That takes in the whole family of God. When we make the prayer that way it is a confession that no man liveth to himself, that we are bound to one another by the ties of our common humanity and of our common dependence upon God. So when we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," we pray not only that we ourselves may have bread, but that all others, too, may have their daily bread. No man can make this prayer as a selfish man. He who prays it sincerely must be touched with a feeling for the infirmities and sorrows and needs of mankind.

Today that prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread," has a ring of agony and distress to it which is almost without precedent. All over the world those terrible Horsemen of the Apocalypse again have been loosed—the Red Horse and his rider, War; the Black Horse and his rider, Famine; the Pale Horse and his rider, Death. In all those conquered and devastated lands of Europe and in vast spaces of war-ridden China, from millions of lips, articulate and inarticulate, goes up humanity's cry, "Give us this day our daily bread." Millions of prisoners press eagerly against the barbed-wire fences which confine them, and wait for their daily bread. When you sincerely utter this prayer you must think of the millions of your unfortunate fellow beings today, and of their need for daily bread, and according to your opportunity give of your own bread to relieve their distress. Listen! "Give us this day our daily bread!" That is the cry I hear going up from the millions of prisoners, from the millions of fugitives and refugees groping amid the smoldering ruins of their homes, and, saddest and most poignant of all, from the lips of little children.

The thing to do with bread is to give it away. Is that not what the Wise Man said of old, "Cast thy bread upon the waters, and in many days it shall return unto thee"? The prayer for our daily bread is not merely that this body and soul shall be kept together, but that with that body and soul I shall be able to serve God and help my fellow man. He who casts his bread upon the waters is sure to find it again after many days. He will find it in the blessings of the poor and needy. He will find it in the approbation and peace of his own conscience. He will find it in the final blessing and reward of Him who taught us to pray this prayer, and Who

Himself is that Bread of life that cometh down from heaven, "I was hungry and ye fed me. . . . Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

VI

FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS, AS WE FORGIVE OUR DEBTORS"

"And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."—ST. MATT. 6:12.

THE language spoken in heaven by the angels and the redeemed is the language of forgiveness. It will be the only language spoken there. No other language will be understood. It will be spoken by the cherubim and the seraphim and the whole angelic host as they praise God, the Author of forgiveness and of eternal Salvation. It will be spoken by all the redeemed as they greet one another on the banks of the River of Life and gather round the throne of the Lamb and sing their song unto Him who loved them and washed them from their sins. But no one can learn that language after he gets to heaven. It must be learned here upon earth, in this world, and in this life. That is what Jesus taught us when He taught us to pray, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

In many of the churches the fifth petition of the Lord's Prayer is repeated thus: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." I like that better, partly because it comes nearer to the meaning of what Christ meant by debts, that is, our sins against God, and partly because of the tender memory of old associations, for at the conclusion of our father's

prayer at family worship in our home we all joined in the Lord's Prayer, and that was the way we repeated the fifth petition, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." In Luke's record of the Lord's Prayer it reads, "Forgive us our sins." The word "trespassess" is the English equivalent for sins, and came into the English Church by way of Tyndale's translation of the Bible. But it will be noted that in Christ's comment on the Lord's Prayer, immediately following the giving of the prayer, He Himself uses the word, "trespasses."

I. A Confession of Our Sins

Every truly Christian prayer must have in it a confession of sin. Man is a sinner, little though he may realize it. And what is sin? The best definition I know is that of the Shorter Catechism: "Sin is any want of conformity to, or transgression of, the law of God." As a rule, when we think of sin we think of the sins of commission, the positive transgression of the law of God. But there are also the sins of omission. Christ laid great stress upon those sins, the words that were not spoken, the deeds of mercy and of righteousness that were not done. In His great sketch of the Judgment that was what He emphasized, "Inasmuch as ye did it not unto the least of these, ye did it not unto me." And what shall we say for the sins of commission, for careless or cruel words, for every one of which Christ says we shall give an account in the Judgment? For the betrayal of confidence? For the betrayal of affection? For deeds that were just off the path of honor and the truth? For acts of injustice? And what about our thoughts and desires, concerning which Christ spoke so much? Thoughts are the deeds of the soul, and God judges the soul.

Sin separates and alienates man from God, and every sin, the Bible tells us, deserves God's wrath and curse. Man must be punished or forgiven. There is no other way to deal with sin. If any one doubts that he is a sinner, and that sin deserves God's punishment then let him behold the agony of the Son of God, the Sin-bearer, as He dies upon the Cross. It is not so much your own conscience, or the careful scrutiny of your own life, or the deeds of other men in the world which teaches you that you are a sinner, as the sight of Christ suffering and agonizing for sinners on the Cross. Because Christ died for sinners, and because of sin, the penalty that He bore on the Cross was the penalty of our sin.

Forgiveness is the grand discovery of Christianity. At the very heart of the Apostles' Creed is that fundamental declaration, "I believe in the forgiveness of sin." Is there a redeemed soul on earth or in heaven, is there an angel or an archangel, who can tell me all that means —"I believe in the forgiveness of sins"? This forgiveness was secured for us by the redeeming and atoning work of Christ on the Cross. The Cross was God's sublime solution of the problem of sin. That problem was, How can a man, made in the image of God, but now stained and defiled by sin, be restored to fellowship and communion with the Holy and Righteous and Infinite God? The Cross was God's solution. "It was," as Dr. Chalmers used to put it, "a problem for a God to solve, and He solved it like a God." He solved it by sending His own Son, Jesus Christ, to bear our nature, take our place, and bear our sins and taste our cup upon the Cross. That is the ground of the Divine forgiveness, for in the Cross of Christ God punished sin and yet opened the gates of forgiveness to all who repent and believe. God remained just, as Paul said, and yet the Justifier of

them that believed in Jesus; so that henceforth there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, but only forgiveness, full and free. He puts our sins away from Him, as far as the east is distant from the west. And who can measure that? Only Christ could have done that work for us.

"There was no other good enough
To pay the price of sin;
He only could unlock the gate
Of heaven, and let us in."

When we sincerely utter this petition of the Lord's Prayer, we do it with penitence, and with the confession that we are sinners and that we deeply need the forgiveness of God. When the doctor of the old school, William MacLure, in *Beside the Bonnie Briar Bush,* was dying, he asked his old friend, Drumsheugh, to take his mother's Bible from the bureau and read a bit to him before he fell asleep. Drumsheugh put on his spectacles and searched for a comfortable scripture, while the light of the lamp fell on his shaking hands and the doctor's face, on which the shadows were now settling. Choosing the fourteenth chapter of John's Gospel, which he said had comforted his mother, he commenced to read, "In my Father's house are many mansions," but MacLure stopped him, saying, "It's a bonnie word, and your mother was a saint; but it's no' for the like o' me. It's ower gude; a' daurna' tak' it. Shut the book and let it open itself, and ye'll get a bit I've been reading every nicht the last month."

Drumsheugh shut the Bible, and then let it open of itself. It opened at the Parable of the Pharisee and the publican. He read till he came to the words, "And the publican standing afar off would not lift up so much as

his eyes to heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner." At that the dying doctor stopped him again and said, "That might hae been written for me, Patrick, or onny ither auld sinner that has feenished his life and has naething to say for himself."

That is the way to repeat the Lord's Prayer! Say it the way the publican did when he prayed, "God be merciful to me a sinner."

II. Required Conditions of Forgiveness

The Divine forgiveness is free, yet there are conditions which are required. The Scriptures declare these to be repentance and faith. Here in this fifth petition, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," or "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us," a forgiving disposition toward our fellow man is laid down as the sign of true repentance and faith.

Some have been troubled without reason by the phraseology of this petition, "As we forgive others," or "As we forgive our debtors," as if it meant that the Divine forgiveness was limited by human conduct. It does not mean that man's forgiveness is the meritorious cause of God's forgiveness to us, but rather a condition which is required. It does not mean that God forgives us because we have forgiven our fellow man, but rather that because we have been forgiven of God we ought to forgive one another. Hence, when we pray, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," we ask for that state of heart and faith which will make us acceptable to God. Paul has an exhortation which throws much light on this petition. The way he puts it is just the reverse

of the way it is put in the Lord's Prayer. He puts the human forgiveness first, and then the Divine forgiveness as the source and inspiration of human forgiveness. "And be ye kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you." When, then, we repeat this petition of the Lord's Prayer, we ask, first, for the free pardon of our sins through the great merit of Jesus Christ and, second, for a truly Christian and forgiving spirit in us. How prominent a place a forgiving spirit takes in the New Testament and in Christian thought is indicated by the fact that when men speak of a certain person as having "a Christian spirit," what is always meant is that he has a forbearing, forgiving spirit.

It is very significant that the only petition of the Lord's Prayer which our Lord seemed to think needed further explanation and emphasis was this petition about forgiveness, for the record we have of the Lord's Prayer in St. Matthew's Gospel is followed by this comment on the fifth petition, as if this was the petition of the Lord's Prayer to which Christ would draw particular attention: "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; but if ye forgive not men their trespasses neither will your heavenly Father forgive your trespasses."

There may be some things in the sayings of Christ about which men can dispute, or which they might attempt to allegorize, or explain away; but there is no missing of the meaning of Christ in that saying. There is one thing that you cannot explain away.

Christ not only taught forgiveness on the part of man to man, but He illustrated it; and how beautifully He did so. At the Lord's Supper He knelt to wash the disciples' feet. If I were a painter that is a scene I would

like to paint, Jesus bending over to wash the wicked traitor's feet.

"Christ washed the feet of Judas!
The dark and evil passion of his soul,
His secret plot and sordidness complete,
His hate, his purposing, Christ knew the whole;
And still in love He stopped and washed his feet."

When you feel that there is someone whose wrong you cannot forget, and whom you cannot forgive, just pause and look at that painting, Jesus washing the feet of Judas!

And there was Peter, too, the man who once asked Jesus how often a man was to forgive one who had done wrong, till seven times seven? Ah, Peter, little didst thou think when thou asked that question that thou thyself wouldst need not only the seven times seven forgiveness, but, as Jesus said, "till seventy times seven"! And on the Cross, when the darkness was gathering, and blood was flowing from His head, His hands and His feet in a crimson flood, and when His enemies were mocking and jeering Him, Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

When Peter asked Christ how often he was to forgive an offender and mentioned what he thought a very liberal allowance, seven times seven, Jesus answered, "I say not unto thee until seven times, but until seventy times seven." This He followed with the great Parable of the Unmerciful Servant, as illustrating what he meant by seventy times seven, and how those who seek the Divine forgiveness must forgive one another. There was an Oriental king who suddenly demanded a reckoning of the steward who had charge of his affairs. This servant had been squandering the revenues and stealing

from his master and was indebted to him for the enormous sum of ten thousand talents, or millions of dollars. He had nothing with which to pay, and, according to the custom of the day, the order had been given for him and his family to be sold into slavery. The distracted and dishonest debtor then waited upon his lord, and falling down before him, cried out, "Lord, have patience with me and I will pay thee all." That, both he and his lord knew, was an utter impossibility. How, with a jail sentence hanging over him, could this dishonest steward get together the vast sum necessary to pay the debt? It was preposterous. Nevertheless, his lord had compassion on him, and not only suspended the sentence that had been passed upon him, but forgave him the entire debt.

And what did that man do? We would like to think that he hurried off to his wife and family and with tears of joy rolling down his face, told them of the great kindness and mercy of the master and how the family had been spared a terrible fate. But that was not what happened. As he descended the steps of the palace he happened to encounter one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred shillings, that is, about seventeen dollars. When he saw him, this million-dollar debtor who had been forgiven, took his own hundred-shilling debtor by the throat, and shaking him, said, with brutal threats, "Pay me what thou owest." The unhappy servant made just the same plea that the millionaire debtor had made to his lord, "Have patience with me and I will pay thee all." But this time the prayer fell on unheeding ears and on an unmerciful heart. With incredible harshness and cruelty the debtor who had been forgiven cast the man into prison.

There are deeds of cruelty which overreach them-

selves. It was so here. The cold cruelty of this man's deed aroused the sympathy and compassion of the companions and fellow servants of the man who had been cast into prison. They were sorry and went and told their Lord what had happened. He at once summoned the wicked servant, and said, "O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt because thou desiredst it of me. Shouldst not thou also have compassion on thy fellow servant, even as I had pity on thee?" Then, in his anger, he delivered the man over to the tormentors, until he should pay all that was due him.

That was Christ's answer to Peter's question about forgiveness. Now hear the word with which He concluded His teaching on that subject. He has just said that the unforgiving man was delivered over to the tormentors: "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." There is another thing, another saying of Christ, that you cannot tone down or explain away.

The prominence that this doctrine of forgiveness of injury holds in the New Testament is proportionate to the devastation and harm done to the souls of men by an unforgiving spirit. It is undoubtedly one of the chief hindrances to the work of grace by the Holy Spirit in a man's heart. There are, first of all, what seem to be slight and trivial offenses, either real or imaginary. One has felt slighted or affronted, or insulted, because the head was averted for a moment, because thanks for some kindness was neglected, because some incident was forgotten, or because there was a comment or a jest that produced a wound. Thus friends are alienated or separated and Christian fellowship, and even Christian worship, interrupted and given up by treasuring these

things up in the heart, by nursing these grudges. Who can tell what injury is done to the soul and what resistance is given to the Holy Spirit? The amazing thing is that Christian people indulge themselves so freely in taking offense, in hurt and wounded feelings, and seem sometimes never to think about this fifth petition, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us," or of those other words of Christ, His comment on that prayer, that if we are not willing to forgive one another our heavenly Father will not forgive us. Business men have a phrase which they use in connection with bad debts. They say these debts are "written off." There are a lot of offenses, real or imagined, which many people, for their own peace of mind, and for their own usefulness and influence, and their own salvation, would do well to "write off." Let them be expunged from the book of memory.

But there are other and more serious offenses, deep, heinous and cruel transgressions—slandering our fellow man, the besmirching his reputation, or stealing his goods or his possessions, cheating or defrauding, or betrayal of affection, or leading an innocent life into temptation and sin, about the worst transgression of all. What about these offenses? Just the same answer as in the case of what seemed to be less serious offenses. Remember that parable of Jesus about the immense debt that unforgiving servant owed his lord and the small trivial debt which his fellow servant owed him. What is your fellow man's offense toward you compared with your transgression towards God?

III. The Blessings of Forgiveness and the Beauty of It

These blessings fall, first of all, upon the man who for-

gives. It makes him an heir to heaven and a candidate for the Divine forgiveness. It lifts from his back the heaviest burden that any one can bear through life, an implacable resentment and an unforgiving spirit. Hannah Moore used to say, "If I had an enemy whom I wanted to punish, I would teach him to hate someone."

Then there is the blessing which it bestows upon the man who is forgiven. That always we must take into consideration, and that was what our Lord said in another of His teachings on forgiveness, where He deals with the subject of reconciliation with the offender, and says, "Thou hast gained thy brother." Every Christian is, or ought to be, interested in the welfare of his brother's soul. Thus the quality of mercy is not strained.

> "It is twice blessed;
> It blesses him that gives and him that takes."

In *Quo Vadis,* that great tale of early Christian history, Chilo, a man of all wickedness, the peripatetic philosopher, thief, slanderer, panderer, and betrayer of the innocent, had sold the wife and daughter of his friend Glaucus into slavery and tried to kill him for his faith in Christ. Glaucus was one of those Christians who were covered with pitch, fastened to pillars, and then set on fire in the Vatican gardens for the amusement of Nero. As he drove down the lines of this human agony, Nero had by his side this wicked Chilo. Presently they came to the pillar where Glaucus was burning, but still alive and conscious. At the wind blew the smoke away for a moment, disclosing the face of Glaucus, Chilo was seized with sudden compunction of conscience and bitter remorse. Stretching his arms up toward the agonized martyr, he cried out, "Glaucus, in Christ's name, forgive me!" At that, the head of the

martyr moved slightly, and from the top of the pillar was heard a voice like a groan, "I forgive."

Those who stood about saw a strange light come into the face of Chilo. Turning towards Nero, and lifting an accusing finger, he cried out, "There is the incendiary!" In the excitement that followed, Chilo encounters in the crowds St. Paul, who tells him of the infinite forgiveness of Christ, and baptizes him into the Christian faith. The next day, when Chilo himself is in the hands of Nero's torturers, who demand that he retract his Christian confession, Chilo asks that he may die in a way the Christians died. When his torturers are binding him with ropes and piercing him with iron tongs, Chilo kisses their hands with humility and forgiveness. Forgiven himself, he had learned to forgive, and he died in peace.

May that deep and blessed peace rest upon us all! Our Father who art in heaven, forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

May you have that double peace—the peace of your own forgiven sins, the peace of forgiving others.

VII

"LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION"

"And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."—MATT. 6:13.

WHEN Jesus, coming out of His bloody agony, in the Garden of Gethsemane found Peter and James and John sleeping, He awakened them and said to them, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." Here, in this sixth petition of The Lord's Prayer, He tells us how to pray that we may not enter into temptation and be overwhelmed by it.

Prayer is the great weapon with which to fight our temptations. It not only enables one to resist the tempter when he makes his assault, but it searches out and discovers the tempter before he strikes and reveals the temptation in its true light. In *Paradise Lost,* Milton tells us that when the presence of Satan was suspected in the Garden of Eden, two angels, Ithuriel and another, set out to search for him. At length they found a toad squatting at the ear of Eve. Ithuriel touched the toad with his spear, and immediately Satan rose up in all his fallen grandeur and cruel malignity. Touch your temptation with the sword of prayer and it will be revealed in its true nature.

Of all the petitions of the Lord's Prayer, this is the one for you to pray early in the morning as you go out into the world or take up the duties of life. You are

going into a world that is full of evil and temptations to do evil. In every circumstance of life, every lot, every association, every labor, every pleasure or hardship, there is a possible temptation. There are temptations for the body, for the mind, for the soul. There are the temptations to the appetite, to selfishness, dishonesty, to the evasion of duty, the disregard of others' rights, indifference to others' sorrows; pride, sloth, envy, suspicion, taking up an evil report against our neighbor, and the subtle, but even more dangerous, temptations to doubt, to unbelief. What a world it is, with Satan desiring to have us that he may sift us as wheat! Hence, how earnestly we ought to make this prayer, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

In this prayer Christ teaches you how to enter a dangerous world and pass through it in safety. Homer tells us that when Ulysses came to the Ægean isle, where the daughter of the sun, Circe, lived, he climbed a hill and saw in the center of the island a palace embowered with trees. He sent forward one half of his crew under the command of Eurylochus to see if he could find hospitality. When the men approached the palace, which was surrounded by wild animals which had once been men now changed into beasts by Circe's art, they heard the sounds of soft music from within. When they entered, all but their leader, Eurylochus, who suspected danger, Circe served them with wine and other delicacies. When they had eaten and drunk heartily she touched them one by one with her wand, and they were immediately changed into swine. When Eurylochus brought the story of this disaster to Ulysses, he went forth to rescue his men. But as he was going, he was met on the way by Mercury, who warned him of the dangerous arts of Circe. But as Ulysses would not be dissuaded from his

efforts, Mercury put in his hand a flower, the fragrance of which he was to inhale, and which had the power to resist all sorceries. Armed with this flower, Ulysses entered the palace of Circe, who entertained him as she had his companions; and when he had eaten and drunk, touched him with her wand, saying, "Hence, seek the sty, and wallow with thy friends!" But protected from her spell by the flower which he carried, Ulysses drew his sword and compelled her to release his companions and restore them to their human form. The Christian has a flower with which he can disarm temptation, and that flower is prayer.

The prayer for safety in temptation comes immediately after the prayer for forgiveness. Forgiveness deals with the past. This petition deals with the future, the temptations which are to come; and the deeper our sense of forgiveness through the mercy of God and the shed Blood of Jesus Christ, the greater will be our hatred of sin and the deeper our dread of being led into sin. That is truly expressed by that verse of the Psalmist, "With thee there is forgiveness, that thou mightst be feared." The soul that is conscious of the forgiveness of God has a new dread of sin and will naturally utter this next petition, "Lead us not into temptation."

This petition of the Lord's Prayer, which I take not as two petitions as some have done, but as one, asks three things of God:

I. That It Shall Please God That We May Be Kept from the Presence of Dangerous Temptations Which May Prove Too Strong for Us

Some have found unwarranted difficulty in the first part of this sixth petition, "Lead us not into temptation." That difficulty is as follows: If by temptation is

meant subjection to trial in the general sense, then when we pray, "Lead us not into temptation," do we not ask for the impossible? For all must be tried, in that sense, tempted. Even the Son of God was driven into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. The other difficulty is this: If by temptation is meant positive incitement to do evil, then how could God lead us into such temptation? And, therefore, why should we pray, "Lead us not into temptation," for, as St. James said, "God cannot be tempted of evil, neither tempteth he any man"?

But these are forced difficulties. They are felt only by the man who debates or discusses this petition, and not by the man who, conscious of moral peril and of his weakness, utters this prayer, asking for the help of God. All temptation is dangerous, and the innocent soul, or the soul that has been touched by evil and delivered from evil, naturally shrinks from being brought into close contact with it. It is true that some great and dangerous temptations may be necessary for us. Nevertheless, we are justified in praying that we may be kept out of range of their menace in so far as it may be consistent with our character's strength and development. When I make this prayer, what I really pray is that I shall not lead myself by my folly, ignorance, or passion, nor permit others to lead me into those places where I shall be unnecessarily assailed by temptation to do that which is evil.

And how much there is of that! How often we lead ourselves, or let others lead us, into the territory of temptation. In one of the battles and sieges of the war between the Netherlands and Spain, an officer was dispatched with an important message to William of Nassau, the Prince of Orange. At that time William was

standing in a place of great danger and was under constant fire. The officer, after delivering his message, remained near the prince. Seeing him, William told him to go to the rear, that he was standing in a place of great danger. When the officer remarked that he could be in no greater danger than the prince himself, William answered, "My office and my duty require that I be here, but your orders do not require you to be here." God may place us in a post where we shall be subjected to dangerous temptation, and when He does so, if we ask Him to help us, He will give us grace and strength sufficient to resist and will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able. But when we lead ourselves into temptation, that is a different matter. Then, in a sense, we are tempting God, as Jesus told the devil he was doing when he suggested that Jesus cast Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple.

Then, to repeat sincerely this petition, "Lead us not into temptation," is to ask that God will keep us from reading those books, going to those entertainments, avoiding those associates, which stir up the law of evil which is in every man's nature, for every soul has its own ladder down to hell. We can lead ourselves or permit others to lead us into circumstances and conditions where temptation is certain to strike and where sin is almost equally certain to wound us. The thing is to avoid entering those places and circumstances. There is not much use in a man trying to row when his boat is only one hundred yards above Niagara Falls. When evil passions are once on the wing they are not easily recalled. When the desire for evil is roused within a man's breast through his own wilfullness and carelessness, he may not be able to restrain his evil desires any

more than a man can beseech an enraged, blood-excited tiger not to leap, or invoke a hooded cobra not to strike.

II. The Second Thing We Pray for When We Say, "Lead Us Not into Temptation," Is That Even When We Have Been Beset by Dangerous Temptation We Shall Not Yield to It

In His providence God may permit Satan to tempt us, as He permitted Satan to tempt Job. When this happens, our prayer is that we shall not be enticed by the temptation, but repelled by it, as Christ was in the wilderness, when He said to Satan, "Get thee behind me, Satan."

This means that we pray that we may be forewarned against temptation and forearmed and prepared for it by prayer and a godly life. That was true of our Lord. He said of His temptation, "Satan cometh and findeth nothing in me." That is, there was nothing in the past thought or life or desire of Jesus through which Satan could gain access to His soul. Satan came, but found nothing in Him. But with us, alas, it is often very different. When he comes he finds so many places, so many open doors and windows through which he can enter into the citadel of the soul.

How carefully we ought to guard even the pool of thought and desire, for wrong thoughts and desires and imaginations are like an accumulation of oil waiting for temptation's torch. If a spark of fire falls upon stone or marble, or upon a block of ice, nothing happens. But if it falls upon gunpowder there is explosion and devastation and death. When we pray, then, "Lead us not into temptation," we pray that God will enable us so to live today that temptation will have no advantage

over us when it comes. And who knows in how many ways God keeps us back from sin? How striking, and yet how comforting, is that word that God spoke to Abimelech, the King of Gerar, who, deceived by the cowardly device of Abraham, was about to take Sarah for his wife, "I withheld thee from sinning against me." That is what you pray for in this sixth petition when you say, "Lead us not into temptation." "O God, I am weak, but Thou art strong. Keep me, I pray Thee, from sinning against Thee."

III. The Third Thing That We Pray for in This Petition Is That When Assailed by Temptation and when evil desires have been aroused, and when all that is evil within us in inclined to take that which temptation offers, we shall have grace and strength given us to resist, and that the voice of Christ shall sound stronger in our ears than the voice of Satan.

When he passed the haunt of the sirens Ulysses had his sailors bind him to the mast of the ship, so that even if he was tempted by their music to desert the path of honor and of duty his bonds would hold him fast. But the Argonauts who went sailing in to the Black Sea, seeking for the Golden Fleece, in that very peninsula where a Russian army is today resisting the German hordes, took Orpheus with them on their ship, and when any danger beset them they had Orpheus play on his magic harp. So Christ in our hearts is the chief defense against temptation. St. Anthony, surrounded in his monastic retreat by the beguiling and seductive manifestations of evil, was about to yield, when suddenly he was conscious of the presence of Christ, and immediately the foul faces and forms vanished, evil

desire was conquered, and the raging sea of passion subsided.

When we pray, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," we pray not only that in the fiercest onset of temptation we may be kept out of evil and kept out of the clutches of Satan, but also that even when we have yielded to temptation and sin, we may be delivered from evil and plucked out of Satan's hands.

There can be no doubt, I think, that the true translation here is not merely evil, but the "Evil One." From the use that Christ made elsewhere of the word here translated "evil," for instance, in the Parable of the Sower, where He says that the one who catcheth away the good seed sown in man's heart is the Wicked One, and from what St. Paul in the letter to the Ephesians says about quenching the fiery darts of "the wicked," and what St. John says about overcoming "the wicked one," there can be no doubt that in this prayer Christ tells us to pray that we may be kept, first of all, out of the power of Satan, and, secondly, that if at any time captured by Satan, we shall be delivered out of his clutches. "Deliver me from the Evil One."

One of the most beautiful, perhaps the most beautiful paraphrases of the Lord's Prayer ever written is that to be found in the eleventh canto of Dante's *Purgatory*, where the souls that are being purged of their sins repeat the Lord's Prayer and this sixth petition, not so much for themselves as for those who come after them on the dangerous path of life. Dante's rendering of the sixth petition is as follows:

> "Our virtue which so soon doth harm receive,
> Put not to peril with our ancient Foe;
> But from his evil sting deliverance give."

In that respect, Dante is not only a great poet, but a true Christian theologian. He represents these souls as asking that they shall not be put to peril by their ancient foe, who is the devil. So St. Paul said that in our warfare we wrestle not with flesh and blood merely, against the evil that is in the world, and in others, and in our own breast, but against that mysterious and powerful source of evil, against principalities and powers, against the rules of the darkness of this world, against the spiritual wickedness in the heavenly places. "Therefore," he says, "Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand the darts of the evil one." It is, of course, the business of Satan to deceive men into thinking that he does not exist at all. That suits him well. But Christ warns us over and over again against his power, and, in this final petition of the Lord's Prayer, teaches us to be on our guard against the devil, and to put on the whole armor of God.

I remember the day an honored servant of God, a well-known minister of Philadelphia, came to see me. He was a man of great devotion and of the highest integrity; but slander always loves a shining mark. A cruel and altogether false charge had been made against his character. The thing that I recall from that conversation is this: He said to me, "I have prayed every day that God would keep me from doing anything that would bring reproach upon Christ or dishonor my ministry." A good prayer that, not only for ministers, but for all who profess the name of Christ. And that is what we pray for in this last petition, that in a world so full of evil and temptation, and where Satan has so many disguises, and where he can transform himself even into an angel of light, we may be kept by the power of God safe from sin and be delivered from the power of the

Evil One. "And now unto him who is able to keep you from falling, and present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."

VIII

"FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM"

"For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever, Amen."—MATT. 6:13.

THE rain, and after it the snow, "cometh down from heaven and returneth not thither"; that is, not immediately; but ultimately it does. It falls on the earth, penetrates the soil, and flowing through and across the earth, enters into the sea, whence it is taken up again into heaven, having completed its cycle of beneficent ministry. So it is with our Lord's Prayer. It begins with God and it ends with God. It begins in heaven, "Our Father who art in heaven," and in its ascriptions, supplications, and adorations, having given expression to man's whole duty to God, to his neighbor, and to himself, returns unto heaven with that great doxology, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."

To the majority of people, I suppose, Amen means nothing more than the sign and notification of a conclusion and ending. It means that the minister has finished his prayer, or that the choir has finished its anthem, or that the last verse of the hymn has been sung. But that is not what it means. Sometimes in one of the old-time churches, when the preacher had made some statement about the great love of God in Christ, or proclaimed some of the glorious attributes of God, or stated

a Christian truth which was based upon the Scriptures and applicable to human life, or described the glory of the Church of the Living God, he would be interrupted by a loud, fervent, and resounding Amen. That Amen, spoken in that way, tells you what "Amen" means at the end of the Lord's Prayer. It is the Hebrew word that means "It is true." It is the same word with which Christ introduced so many of His tremendous sayings, "Verily, verily, I say unto you"; literally, "Amen, amen." Spoken by the devout and praying and believing heart Amen means, "It is true!" and "Let it be true"; or "Let it come to pass!" So the Lord's Prayer comes to a close with a grand Amen. As the Shorter Catechism so well puts it, "And in testimony of our desire and assurance to be heard, we say, Amen."

The doxology, or conclusion, of the Lord's Prayer is a confession of our faith that unto God belongs the kingdom, the power, and the glory. This is one of the most reiterated teachings of the Word of God.

I. The Kingdom Is God's in the Affairs of This World

In the second petition of the Lord's Prayer we pray, "Thy kingdom come"; but, in the sense of God's authority and dominion, the kingdom is here now. It has always been here. It will always be here. "Thine is the kingdom." The proud king, Robert of Sicily, and brother of one of the Popes, appareled in magnificent attire, was listening on St. John's eve to the priests as they chanted the *Magnificat*. He caught at one particular phrase which the priests were chanting in Latin, and asked the clerk what it meant. When the clerk told him the words were these: "He has put down the mighty from their seat and has exalted them of low degree,"

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King Robert muttered scornfully, " 'Tis well that such seditious words are sung only by priests and in the Latin tongue; for let it be known that there is no power that can push me from my throne." With that he leaned back and fell asleep. When he awoke it was already night and he was alone in the empty church. When he succeeded in having the door of the cathedral opened, he rushed through the night to the banqueting room of his palace; but there on the dais sat another king, wearing his robes, his crown, his signet ring. It was an angel, whose identity no one recognized. When Robert claimed his throne, saying that he was the rightful king, the king on the throne, or the angel, told him that he was but the king's jester, and commanded him to wear the jester's bells and cape, and for his counsellors to lead an ape through the streets. So the years passed with the ex-king performing the wretched office of a jester. But one day, during Holy Week, the angel king summoned the jester-king before him, and said, "Art thou the king?" Whereupon the penitent Robert confessed his sins and acknowledged that the angel was the king. With that the angel vanished. When the court attendants appeared, they found Robert appareled again in splendor, as in days of old, but kneeling on the floor near his throne, absorbed in private prayer. So the legend, enshrined in noble verse by Longfellow, taught the great truth that God is the only King, that He putteth down the mighty from their seats and exalted them of low degree.

"Thine is the kingdom." But is the kingdom His? Look abroad in the world, and what do you see? You see a race revolted from God and steeped in sin. You see social injustice, vice, and wickedness commercialized and exploited; a world wrapped in the clouds of battle

smoke, and millions of men engaged in the pastime of mutual slaughter and annihilation. How then, can we say, "For thine is the kingdom"? Does it not look more as if the kingdom is Satan's? Satan, indeed, definitely made that claim when he took our Lord to the top of an exceeding high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of this world and the glory thereof, and said, "All this will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." But Satan's claim was fraudulent. Whatever the surface appearance of the world may be, Satan is only a temporary invader and trespasser. The kingdom is God's.

Where, then, are the signs of this kingdom and of God's rule over all the world?

We see it, first of all, in the presence and survival of moral and spiritual ideas and convictions. It is true that in the conquered lands today innocent and helpless hostages are stood up against the wall and slaughtered by firing squads for crimes they have not committed. But it is also true that this wicked and barbarous practice has aroused a feeling of horror and indignation throughout the whole world. It is true that all over Europe there are burned cities and devastated homes and long lines of the wretched refugees, and thousands upon thousands of helpless little children. But it is also true that the sorrow and misery of these people and of these little children have set in motion waves of Christian sympathy and compassion throughout the whole world. It is true that nation after nation has been enslaved and its liberties crushed and its freedom destroyed; but it is also true that this very calamity has awakened world-wide interest in the freedom and the rights of man and a determination to defend them at all costs, and, where it is possible, to restore them. It

is true that floods of barbarism and cruelty have been loosed on mankind; but it is also true that this very world cataclysm has given new publication and proclamation to great Christian beliefs and principles of life, and has lifted them up above the world storm. These are: belief in God, belief in the soul, in the sacredness of every life, in a power working for righteousness in the world; the conviction that evil systems and evil tyrannies are doomed, that righteousness and justice must in the end prevail, and that even where truth appears to be on the scaffold and wrong appears to be on the throne, God is there, behind the dim unknown, keeping watch above His own. Such beliefs, such convictions, such hopes, and the deeds which are based upon them, are possible only because God has not forsaken His world, and has never abdicated His throne. His is still the kingdom, and the power, and the glory for ever. In every period of world chaos and confusion the hope of the world is with those who have faith to see that God is on His throne and that He is the only King.

Again, we have an evidence of God's kingdom in the manifest element of justice and retribution in the sufferings of the world. "My judgments are abroad in the earth."

We have taken too easy views of God and the administration of His kingdom. There is nothing in the Bible that would lead us to believe that men and nations can continue to sin against God and suffer no consequences. God does terrible things in righteousness. If we see today the nations in turmoil and agony, shall we discern therein any departure from those principles of righteousness and judgment, of sin and retribution, which are laid down for us in the Bible? The nations which forget God shall be cast into hell. The flames of

that hell are burning all about us today. The history of the world is the judgment of the world. The history of the world is a Bible which bears witness to God.

Again, we see God's kingdom in the history of the world. In his chapter on the adoption of the Constitution of the United States, Bancroft throws out this suggestion: "Do nations float darkling down the stream of the ages without hope or consolation, swaying with every wind, and ignorant whither they are drifting? Or is there a Superior Power of intelligence and love which is moved by justice and shapes their forces?" The Bible has a plain answer to that question, for it tells us that God is the Supreme Actor of history, and that the great men and the great nations and the great movements are but the brief embodiment and transient realization of His desires.

We see the hand of God and the kingdom of God in history, in the planting and development of nations. Paul said to the philosophers of Mars Hill that "God hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell in all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed and the bounds of their habitation." We might speak of our own nation, so singularly, planted, preserved, and built up on this virgin continent. But the one great example of God's hand upon the nation is, of course, the history of Israel. Forever will it be true that God has not dealt so with any people; and the chapter of His dealings with them is not yet finished.

Again, we see the outlines of God's kingdom in the world and His hand in history in the sudden and unexpected turning points in history, in the overthrow and turning back of despots and conquering nations. There are many instances of this which one might mention.

But there is one that is suggested by the events which are transpiring today. The world has been reading about the German invasion of Russia, and of these old battlefields and cities and rivers which are associated with the campaign of 1812, when Napoleon seemed to be at the zenith of his power and influence, and his word was law from Sweden to the Mediterranean. The river Nieman, the Borodino, Smolensko, and Moscow again take the front place in the news of the world. Today the pyramids of French cannon and cannon balls piled up before the Kremlin at Moscow show the high-water mark of Napoleon's career and conquest. From Moscow to the Nieman his legions lay scattered in the snow, frozen in the rivers, dead on the successive fields of battle. In a single campaign the great victories of history were suddenly succeeded by one of the greatest military disasters of all time.

Once more, we see the hand of God in history, and the unmistakable truth that His is the kingdom, in the way in which He brings good out of evil. The Jew was punished and dispersed throughout the world; but the synagogues, with their knowledge of the true God, were the first pulpits for the apostles of Christ. Rome overran and crushed the nations of the world; but Roman law and government and Roman roads made possible the proclamation of the Gospel. Out of what at the time seemed a complete and irredeemable calamity abiding good has come. I have no doubt that it will come out of this present struggle. Indeed, one of the most singular things appears about to take place, and that is, the new situation in Russia. There, where the whole power of the State was organized against Christianity as perhaps never at any other place since the days of the Roman emperors, and where the knowledge of the Gospel

was systematically removed from the minds of the people, we see a remarkable change taking place. By one of the unforseeable and unpredictable developments of this gigantic world struggle Russia has been thrown on the side of the great democratic nations, Great Britain and America. The repercussion of this extraordinary event will mean, if we can judge from the present conditions, the opening of Russia once more to the Gospel. The representatives of the American Bible Society are already gathering a fund to send Bibles into Russia, and, according to the latest reports, the door is about to open. Thus God works in the world and makes the wrath of man to praise Him. Always the stars are fighting against Sisera, "for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory."

II. God's Kingdom in Our Own Lives

"Thine is the kingdom"—to pray that means that we humbly and cheerfully assent and confess to God's providence in our own lives. We recognize that all events, even the hard and painful, are part of the rule and government of God in our lives.

How thrilling, then, is the thought that my life, your life, is a part of the great empire of God where I recognize Him as King! Yet, as in an earthly kingdom a province may be in revolt, so my life as a part of God's dominion may be in revolt against Him. I stood recently by the coffin of a young man who had been cut off untimely; that is, untimely as to man's view and measurement. After the young widow had poured out her soul in grief, and asked questions which no man could answer, I said to her, "God will give you strength and faith, and out of this good will come." "No," she answered, "good will not come out of it." And good

will not come out of it unless she also wills it. That was what the apostle meant when he said that "no chastisement for the present seemeth joyous, but rather grievous; nevertheless, to them that are exercised thereby it yields the peaceable fruits of righteousness." Hence, when we say, "Thine is the kingdom," we pray that God may have His own way with us and rule and reign over our hearts and lives.

What about God's kingdom in your life? "Thine is the kingdom," you pray in the Lord's Prayer; but is His kingdom in your home, in your office, in your profession, in your business, in your check book, in your social and personal relationships? Is the authority of God owned there?

For us God's final kingdom is Christ's kingdom of grace and redemption. To say "Thine is the kingdom," means for us that Christ is King and that we bow to His rule, for He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. His is the Kingdom and His is the glory. "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth his handiwork." But there is a glory that the heavens cannot declare and a glory which the stars cannot show, and that is the glory of God in redemption, in the kingdom of Salvation.

"Nature with open volume stands
To sound her Maker's praise abroad,
And every labor of His hands
Shows something worthy of God.

"But in the grace that rescued man
His brightest form of glory shines;
There on the Cross 'tis clearest drawn,
In precious blood and crimson lines."

"Thine is the kingdom." Can you say it in that sense, that you are a citizen of the kingdom of redemption, that you have been saved and redeemed by His most precious blood? It is by entering into that kingdom that we enter into Eternal Life, and into the Everlasting Kingdom. Thine, O Christ, is the kingdom and the power, and the glory forever. This is, the Kingdom of Salvation that lasts forever. That is the only kingdom, the only thing to which you can attach that word "forever." Upon how many of the things which you follow and pursue is stamped that word "forever"? Yet "forever" is the only word suitable and appropriate for the immortal soul which is to endure forever and forever. I hear people now and then speak lightly of it; but I confess I never see it and never read it without being, to a degree, silenced and solemnized and filled with awe and reverence. That question which you sometimes see painted on a great rock by the roadside, or upon some barn or other building, "Where will you spend eternity?"—I could never smile or laugh at that question! And with that question I close this sermon and these meditations upon the Lord's Prayer. "Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever." Will you share in that "forever"?

Where will you spend eternity?

Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.

God's Kingdom in your life
Can others see it?

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